Muscle Cramps

Muscle cramps can wake you up in the middle of the night or stop you in your tracks in the middle of an activity. Muscle cramps are common and occur when muscles involuntarily contract and cannot relax. Cramps occur most often in legs, especially in the calf muscle but can also occur in your feet and hands. Cramps may only last a few seconds or minutes but they can be very painful. Frequent cramping can disrupt your life and can even be debilitating.

The Electrolyte Connection

While there’s lots of debate and research about the causes for cramping, it’s important to remember that electrolytes – namely sodium, potassium, magnesium and calcium - fundamentally drive muscle function. Sodium constricts the muscle and potassium relaxes it. Calcium and magnesium play important roles in the switching and timing of muscle contractions. Think of these electrolytes like a four way switch that, when working well, create smooth muscle functioning.

You could conclude that most cramping occurs due to a potassium deficiency and you might be right. However, because magnesium and calcium are also important, cramping may be a result of a deficiency or imbalance of any on these four primary electrolyte minerals. Ratios are important here. You may have a normal store of potassium but an elevated level of sodium; or you may have adequate calcium but low magnesium. Improper ratios of these minerals could trigger a muscle problem.

How could you build a better muscle four way switch? Be sure your diet includes mineral rich foods and be careful about your sodium consumption – see the list below. Use your sense of taste to help you choose the right foods for you.

- Sodium – avoid convenience and fast foods; use sea or rock salt to salt your food to taste
- Potassium – fruits; dark leafy greens; dried beans; potatoes
- Calcium – milk, yogurt, kefir; dark, leafy greens, sardines, canned salmon
- Magnesium – dark, leafy greens, nuts; seeds; dried beans; chocolate

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Supplements

Magnesium is the most commonly used supplement for cramps. You’ll find many magnesium supplements on the shelf. Magnesium is combined with other minerals or buffers for absorption. The most common are magnesium citrate, magnesium oxide and magnesium gluconate – any of these may help.

Electrolyte supplements typically provide extra support for two or three of the four main electrolytes - sodium, potassium and sometimes magnesium. LYTE BALANCE ELECTROLYTES provide a balanced electrolyte formula that includes magnesium. It’s a concentrate so you can add it to water, milk, kefir, yogurt, smoothie or any beverage you like. Many people have found cramp relief with Lyte Balance. The bonus is that electrolytes also help keep you hydrated and improve circulation.

If you want or need more help for a cramping problem, the Lyte Balance + Buffers Kit may be just what you’re looking for. The Lyte Balance + Buffers Kit includes a bottle of Lyte Balance electrolytes plus individual bottles of magnesium, calcium and two pH buffers (betaine hydrochloride and ammonium chloride) to add as wanted or needed. How would you know if your body wants these extra buffers? Your natural senses of smell and taste!

Your Nose Knows

Smell & taste are your built in nutrient navigation system. Your senses of smell and taste are the front line in a complex feedback loop connecting your brain, nervous system and digestive processes with one clear goal: To direct your choices toward the best nutrients to nourish your body. With the Buffer Kit, a simple smell test of will let you know whether to add magnesium, calcium or other buffers. Smell testing these key nutrients will create your personal ratio/ mix and is a natural, non-invasive way to explore solutions to your cramping issues.
References


Magnesium: Fact Sheet for Health Professionals http://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Magnesium-HealthProfessional/


